

To view the *Final Yosemite Valley Plan/SEIS*, visit
www.nps.gov/yose/planning



The view of Yosemite Valley from Tunnel View, as depicted on the back cover of each volume of the Final Yosemite Valley Plan/SEIS, would remain unimpaired by actions of the plan.

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If you have not already ordered a copy of the *Final Yosemite Valley Plan/SEIS*, and you would like one, please send us your request.

- **Email your request to:** yose_planning@nps.gov
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“By listening to your testimonies and considering your perspectives, we heard how much you care for Yosemite. This is our common purpose: to care for Yosemite so that all may experience it.”

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

“When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.”

— John Muir, *My First Summer in the Sierra*, 1869

PLANNING UPDATE

Volume 18

November 2000

Dear Friends of Yosemite:

I WANT TO OFFER MY PERSONAL THANKS to each and every one of you who considered the *Draft Yosemite Valley Plan/Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement* and shared your thoughts and feelings with us in some way. Most of you took the time to write to us. Some of you came to the Valley and participated in a ranger-led walk to



see first-hand some of the places and issues in need of resolution. Many of you took advantage of the more than 60 open houses presented at the Yosemite Valley Visitor Center where you were able to interact one-on-one with park staff. However you chose to become involved, you took your role as citizens seriously and became a necessary part of the plan's development. By

listening to your thoughts and incorporating them into our proposals, we were able to craft a better plan.

We believe the *Final Yosemite Valley Plan/Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement* is just that—a better plan. It is the culmination of a monumental effort by our planning team to synthesize your comments and concerns and integrate them into a framework for how the National Park Service proposes to manage Yosemite Valley.

By listening to your testimonies and considering your perspectives, we heard how much you care for Yosemite. This is our common purpose: to care for Yosemite so that all may experience it. Our future generations depend on us to continue to work together to achieve these noble goals.

Sincerely,

David A. Mihalic
Park Superintendent



Volume IB, Part 1 — Environmental Consequences of Alternative 1 and Alternative 2.

Changes in Yosemite Valley: The Next 5 to 20 Years

WITH IMPLEMENTATION OF the *Yosemite Valley Plan*, visitors could expect these changes.

Opportunities would exist for a more natural park experience — By restoring riverbanks and meadows, reducing conflicts with cars, connecting overnight accommodations more closely with the Valley environment, and improving interpretive and education services, visitors would enjoy a more natural park experience.

The variety of camping opportunities would be increased — A total of 500 campsites would be available in Yosemite Valley. Campgrounds would be redesigned to include more varied camping experiences, ranging from drive-in sites with hook-ups to walk-to campgrounds.

Park information would be easier to obtain and wayfinding would be improved — Visitor centers and orientation facilities near park entrances would provide a stronger sense of arrival as well as easier access to information, park programs, and wilderness permits.

There would be more Valley trails away from roads — Visitors would be able to walk and bicycle on more trails in the Valley.

The Valley shuttle bus system would be expanded — Greatly increased access through Yosemite Valley would be available, using best-available technology for cleaner, quieter shuttle buses.

Volume 18 November 2000



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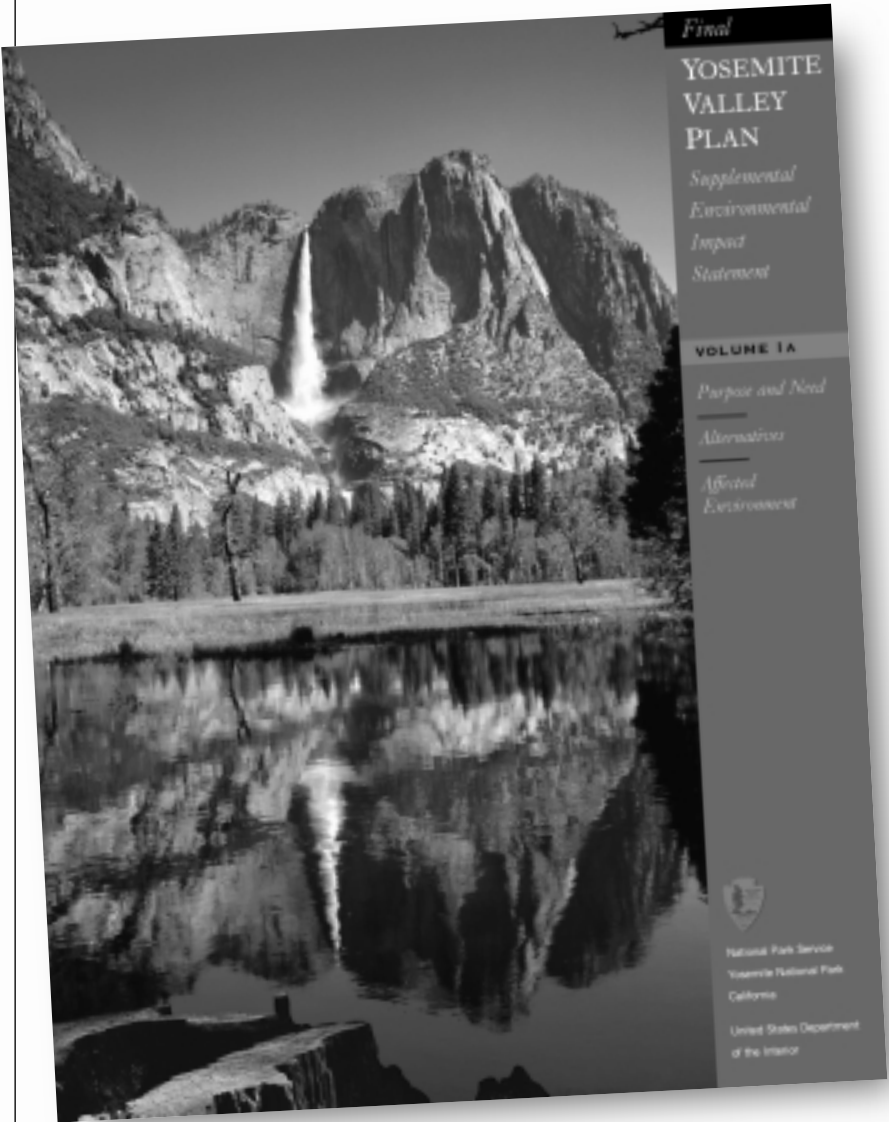
Sue Beatty edited this issue with contributions from Jill Irwin and Deb Vreeland.

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Final Yosemite Valley Plan/SEIS Completed

The National Park Service is pleased to announce the mid-November 2000 release of the *Final Yosemite Valley Plan/Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement* (SEIS). The completion of this phase of Yosemite Valley planning marks a significant achievement for the future of Yosemite National Park. The final plan/SEIS was produced through a complex process that involved compiling and analyzing over 10,000 comments from the public on the draft plan. The National Park Service believes the *Final Yosemite Valley Plan/SEIS* confirms what many think is important about Yosemite Valley.

The *Final Yosemite Valley Plan/SEIS* aims to restore the grandeur and health of Yosemite Valley and return the Valley to people, not cars. Based on ecological principles as well as your comments that the Merced River is the heart of Yosemite Valley—the primary means by which most people connect to the Valley, whether it be sunning on a beach or hiking to Vernal Fall—the final plan works to honor the river.



Volume IA — Executive Summary, Purpose of and Need for the Action, Alternatives, and Affected Environment.

HOW PUBLIC COMMENT INFLUENCED THE FINAL PLAN

The thousands of comments the National Park Service received demonstrated what many liked about the *Draft Yosemite Valley Plan/SEIS* and what concerned some people. While balancing public comments, scientific data, 1980 *General Management Plan* goals, and applicable laws and policies, the National Park Service carefully reviewed and adjusted the draft plan in order to produce the final plan. Listed below are several aspects of the Yosemite Valley planning effort confirmed to be important.

- **Restoration of highly valued natural resources is a priority, especially along the length of the Merced River in Yosemite Valley.** Such resources include meadows, riparian areas along the river's edge, wetlands, black oak woodlands, sensitive wildlife habitat, and rich soil areas. The total developed acreage in Yosemite Valley would be reduced by 71 acres.
- **Staying overnight in Yosemite Valley is a magical experience.** Connecting to the park through more rustic lodging or camping unique to a national park is important.
- **Information about Yosemite Valley should be easier to access.** Even before they arrive at the entrance, people should be able to get information about the park. In Yosemite Valley, the visitor center would be relocated adjacent to Valley day-visitor parking.
- **Yosemite Valley should be less dominated by cars.** Shuttle bus service would be increased, some roads would be removed, and out-of-Valley parking would be provided seasonally when the 550-space in-Valley parking area is full.
- **Expand the hiking and bicycling trail system and increase shuttle bus access to trails.** The conversion of some roads to multi-use paved trails would add to the Valley trail system.
- **Honor Native American culture in Yosemite Valley.** Development would be removed from several sacred sites.



Volume IB, Part 2 — Environmental Consequences of Alternatives 3 through 5, Consultation and Coordination, glossary, bibliography, list of preparers, and index.

The National Park Service made several changes to the draft to produce the final plan based on its review and public comment. Two changes are noted below.

- **Emphasize overnight stays in the Valley that are unique to a traditional national park experience** (instead of motel-like units similar to those available outside the park). Because of this concern, more rustic accommodations in the Valley were retained in the final plan. The number of campsites, Housekeeping Camp units, and Curry Village tent cabins were increased over the draft plan proposals, and the entire character of Yosemite Lodge would be refocused from motel units to a more cabin-like or lodge experience.
- **To reduce potential land development within Yosemite National Park, provide out-of-Valley parking outside the park boundary.** With this in mind, the National Park Service would place a priority on participating in a public/private partnership to develop out-of-Valley parking on private property at Hazel Green, adjacent to the park near the Big Oak Flat Road/Highway 120.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Although the *Final Yosemite Valley Plan/SEIS* has been released, work on the Yosemite Valley planning effort is not done. We need your continued participation in the process! After a 30-day “No Action Period,” which is scheduled to conclude December 23, 2000, the National Park Service's Pacific West Regional Director will sign an official Record of Decision. The National Park Service will then work toward getting the plan implemented. Because there are over 250 separate actions proposed in the final plan, implementation will take more work.

During 2001, the design of some specific elements of the plan should be underway, directed by the detailed sequencing plan being developed to guide the timing of actions under the *Yosemite Valley Plan*. It will take perhaps a decade or more to fully implement the plan. The National Park Service looks forward to the public's involvement, participation, and patience during this process.



Volume IC — Plates (includes 50 maps of alternatives).



Volume II — Appendices (including the sequencing plan and biological assessment).



Volume III — Public comments and responses.

- **Beautiful photographs grace the front and back covers of each volume.** They were taken by nature photographer Scot Miller. Since his first visit to Yosemite in 1990, Miller has tried to capture the magnificence and grandeur of the park. He currently lives in Carrollton, Texas.
- **Watch for Planning Update 19 in early 2001.**